

Come Wayward Souls by FearNoEvil

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Summary:

Three socially maladjusted young men from three different places come together to discover the secrets of the dark alternate dimensions they've only glimpsed, but not fully penetrated . . .

Come Wayward Souls

To See and to Believe was a hippy-dippy little website for self-described ‘paranormal investigators’ or – as they laughingly referred to themselves, ‘occult freaks’. It was a place where true believers could post all manner of stories, theories and musings about supernatural phenomena without the threat of ridicule. It was carefully and lovingly moderated, such that those non-believers who just went there for a laugh could enjoy it for its ridiculousness, but they were not allowed to ruin it for anyone else. Its current tag line, “Share Your Truth”, was being hotly contested by its three of four active adherents in favor of “The *True* News of the Weird.” It was the kind of place that Seto Kaiba would take one look at before having a hearty – though cold and humorless – laugh, and then deleting from his internet history.

Bakura loved it. He would have loved it even if the supernatural had never actually happened to him. He read and commented on its posts so often that the site creator and sole admin, username SpookyMulder93, was in talks to make him a co-admin. He apparently had less time to moderate his site now that he’d gotten his dream gig as a consultant on some conspiracy-chasing reality show, and Bakura was heavily considering the offer.

He had just gotten home from school, grinning as he listened to the one answering machine message from his dad excitedly describing the tomb he’d investigated today and how he couldn’t wait to show his son the pictures on his next break, when he sat down to check the site for updates. He felt a little wired today, so it was probably a good day for figure-painting, to keep his hands busy. He would just to one check of his usual sites and – there was a comment on his latest post.

The Shadow Realm

Posted by WhiteWizard96

Filed under Portals and Other Realms, Other Supernatural Creatures, Demonic Possession, Cursed Objects, Ancient Mythologies

I've talked a lot about the times when I was possessed, so much that you may think that was the only weird thing that ever happened to me! But once, when possessed, my Spirit lost a wager, and as his penalty, both of the souls in my body paid the price. We were sent to another dimension that our group calls "The Shadow Realm"; I wasn't the only one to spend time there, but everyone else prefers to forget about it and put it behind them.

"The Shadow Realm" was a deeply unpleasant place, infested with violent spirits. Its name was very apt. The air was cold and oppressive, and everything felt heavy and dark. Everything took so much effort. And there was nothing at all to eat! Usually, it seems, the only beings there are disembodied spirits, but somehow I got sent there, body and all. On the plus side, I was separated from my pesky possessor for a while. On the downside, I was constantly running for my life to avoid my soul being shredded by the monsters! It's odd, because it was so vivid and scary at the time, but the more time passes, the faster the memory fades – like the memory of a dream. Now I think I can only remember remembering it later. And what I remember are only the facts, mental notes I took, and the feelings they stirred in my subconscious. I got out when the man who defeated my possessor was defeated, and haven't been back since, thank goodness.

Supposedly, access to this realm was only possible with the seven artifacts we had, which are now buried and gone. But how can they be so sure? I am certain the Shadow Realm must still exist, and be parallel to this earth. If FriendlyGhost45's theories on alternate worlds are correct (and if you've read my comments you'll know I've always found them stunningly astute!) then there are innumerable ways this world could be reached – our artifacts being only one of many. Has anyone else had a similar experience? Been sent to a dark, horrific, parallel plane? Any theories on how else to reach it, how to open or seal portals?

On one hand, I never want to go back. Once was enough. On the other hand, I can't help but think there might be other innocent people still trapped there; my possessor was very fond of sending people there himself. And wouldn't it be safer to at least know where these doors to alternate worlds are, so that one can take the precaution to barricade them? Much better than just hoping they never get opened again . . .

Comments: (1)

WilfulWizard83: I was in a dark alternate plane once. My mom and the local sheriff had to come and rescue me. One of the creatures from within dragged me there. The portal had supposedly been opened by accident by a girl who was given supernatural powers but some creepy experimentation meant to make her a spy. Anyway, I spent a week there and it was NOT a great week. :/ Another of the beast's victims was killed almost right in front of me. I don't think anyone else alive is there so I wouldn't want to go back, but knowing how to seal the portal sounds like a great idea, in case something like this happens again. It's great to know I'm not alone in this! It's also kind of funny you call it the Shadow Realm. My friends settled on calling it the Upside-Down, but I always preferred to call it the Vale of Shadows, after the place in D&D. Hope this helps!

When Bakura finished reading the comment for the twelfth time, he realized that his hands were trembling. His heart was in his throat. He'd gotten affirmation for his posts before – an occasional comment along the lines of “That’s rough, buddy L” or “glad u’re doin better m8” when talking about his possession, or enthusiastic agreement on his more theoretical posts – but *nothing* like this! Nothing with an actual shared experience! Nothing so specific, so thorough, so well-punctuated and capitalized! (Internally Bakura again reminded his inner extremely English grammar snob to shut up.) And yet he managed focus on the silliest aspect of the comment, and comment thread was born.

WhiteWizard96: You play D&D??

WilfulWizard83: Haha, yeah, my friends and I love it. We called the beast that took me the Demogorgon. Why, do you play, too?

WhiteWizard96: Sometimes! I paint Monster World figurines by commission, and it's probably my favorite tabletop overall, but I've tried most of them, and D&D is a classic! Wow, it's so cool to discover another RPG nerd here! XD

WilfulWizard83: It is really cool! Maybe we can have an online game sometime! Or I can see if my friends want to commission some figurines!

WhiteWizard96: Awww, that's so nice! Nice to have more in

common than being in freaky parallel worlds!

Here's a link to my shop for premade figurines and commission details:

<https://www.streetstand.com/shop/ChangeOfHeartDesigns>

WilfulWizard83: Cool, thanks!

Hey, um

Since you've been so nice

I've been meaning to ask you

WhiteWizard96: ??

Anything! Ask away, friend! J

WilfulWizard83: OK well

Have you had like

Side effects

From being in the Shadow Realm?

I mean sicne you've been back?

Do you sometimes feel like you're still there??

WhiteWizard96: What kind of side effects? L

WilfulWizard83: OK well I've never told anyone this except my big brother, finally, just the other day

But I'll tell you

Since you seem nice and will take me seriously

When I was there, there was like this creepy plant that growing INSIDE me.

It was attached to me, leeching off my life force.

And sometimes I still cough up bits of it

And I get these flashes

Like for just a minute

I'm back there again

Like I never left

Like the real world is an illusion

Bakura couldn't think how to respond for a moment. He gnawed his fingernails in anxiety, staring at the keyboard. But before he could reply, another comment had appeared, by a third commenter.

ClarinetWizard86: DUDE the plant thing!! The same EXACT thing happened to MY little brother!

Author's Note:

Hahaha, there's my attempt at spooky Halloween fic! I knew I had to write this the moment my mom made a quip about the "Shadow Realm" when the "Vale of Shadows" was first mentioned on Stranger Things! I hope I can continue this story, and give Wirt (ClarinetWizard86) and Will (WilfulWizard83) their own POV chapters!

I know Stranger Things takes place in 1983, the aesthetic of the modern world in Over the Garden Wall seems like the '80s, too, and Yu-Gi-Oh! didn't exist until at least '96, but - I'm electing to sort of ignore pesky timelines. Either Will and Wirt will be older now, or I'll just move their stories later in the timeline so that they have internet and are around Bakura's own age. Time will tell!

Thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed this ridiculous crossover! :)